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Uncle Sam's Family

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UNCLE SAM'S FAMILY

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By DOROTHY F. McCONNELL

Illustrated by
KATHARINE PEIRSON

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UNCLE SAM'S FAMILY

Sliding, skidding, now holding to this branch, now to that, Peter David made his way down toward the cabin.

I

PETER DAVID

ONLY a goat, or a Mountain man, or Peter David could have followed the path that Peter David took up the side of that Southern mountain. It had been but very faintly pressed by the feet of travelers. It disappeared under a tangle of vines; it went over an old root; it doubled on itself; but it always went up and up. Peter David followed it carelessly—as if his feet knew it so well that his eyes could be occupied with other things. He whistled mightily, which spoke well for his lungs, for the path was steep. Every once in a while he would stop and look down behind him at the trees reddening in the autumn. There was such a mass of them that it looked as if the bottom of the earth were covered with gold, and red, and brown leaves. They looked soft—as if you could dive into them.

Soon he crossed over the crest of the mountain

and started down the other side, still at the same pace. Occasionally he stopped whistling to listen to a bird; occasionally he drew a breath for sheer happiness. Then he came to a ledge of rock that jutted out over the side of the mountain, and here he threw himself down on his stomach. Far below, scarcely bigger than a match box, was a cabin. The smoke from its chimney came up straight and thin in the clear air, like a welcome.

At sight of the cabin, Peter David gave a great "Halloa!" which split the silence and echoed and reechoed through the trees until all was still again. But the cabin took no notice. Only the thin smoke gave sign that anyone lived there.

Here Peter David forsook the road and let himself down the side of the mountain. Sliding, skidding, now holding to this branch, now to that, scratching his face and his arms and his legs, he made his way down toward the cabin, and a rattle of little stones skipped ahead of him to give warning of his approach.

With dirt flying and arms grasping, very red of face and short of breath, he arrived at the bottom. He wiped his face and then grinned. He was home! His pappy would be coming

home now, the old hound a-loping at his heels. And then, having caught his breath once more, he called again, "Halloa!" and raced around to the front of the cabin.

"Hi there!" he yelled. "It's me, Peter David! I come home."

His pappy and his mammy came to the door. They stood and looked at him in silence—and then, slowly, his pappy came toward him.

"How come you come home?" he asked, and Peter David suddenly realized that his pap did not share his joy.

"I sent you to school for larnin'; how come you come home?"

"Mebbe the teacher licked him, Pappy," the tall, gaunt woman in the door suggested.

"That teacher couldn't lick nobody, Mammy. She's jes' a little gel who's been down to Mornin'-side to the school thar. At least she couldn't lick Peter David."

"Peter David is such a hand for larnin', Pap, I wouldn't think he'd leave without no reason."

"Well," the father looked at his son sternly, "ain't ye got nothin' to say?"

"Yes, I got somethin' to say." Peter David

stood very straight. "Thar warn't no larnin' thar. All you do is to set on a bench and read, 'This is a cat.' There ain't no sense to it at all, Pappy. An' ever'one is there—li'l fellers and big men, most as big as you. And we all set and read 'This is a cat.' That ain't no larnin', is it, Pappy? I guess I knowed a cat when I see it. And the teacher was allays a-trippin' me in my words."

"A-trippin' you in your words?"

"Yes, I would say somethin' and she'd say, 'That isn't a word!' jes' like that. And near everything I said, she said, 'twarn't no word, and I got a-weary tryin' to find out what was words, so I come home."

"A-trippin' you in your words!" said the tall, gaunt woman. "That little gel, jes' because she been to Mornin'side a spell, tryin' to tell Peter David his words ain't words! Well, I don't think much o' that kind o' larnin'."

"There mus' be some good kind o' larnin'," said the father slowly, "but us Mountain folks, we don' never seem to get it."

Peter David sensed the change in his parent's attitude.

"So I come home," he repeated.

"They's some cakes in on the table," his mother said.

It was two or three days later that Pappy sent Peter David down to The Forks to fetch home a bag of corn-meal. Peter David went willingly. He liked to step along, with the leaves rustling under his feet and the squirrels a-peeping at him from the far side of the tree trunk, their jaws bulged out with nuts. But as he stepped along, he pondered.

"They must be some place whar you kin get larnin' that is larnin'," he mused to himself. "Larnin' that would teach you why those squirrels go shinnyin' up t'other side of the tree—and what this here earth is made of—and why the sky is blue. They jes' must be some way o' larnin' about things like that! Only," he wondered, "where do you find out?"

At The Forks he got his corn-meal, chaffed a bit with old Jeff the storekeeper, and started home again. But just as he was going out the low door, he saw the parson ride up on his old droop-eared mule.

"Hi there, Peter David!" called the parson.

"I thought you'd gone over the mountain to school!"

"There warn't no larnin' over there," answered Peter David shortly.

"Is that so?" The parson looked long at Peter David, and then he said, "S'pose you tell me about it."

"Well," Peter David began, "first you went in and set along a bench with li'l fellers and big fellers and some gels. And you get a book given to you that said, 'This is a cat. The cat runs.' Parson, when I was a-askin' you how the bees lived, ye tole me as how I could find it out through book larnin'. Parson, ye can't do it. I looked clear through the book, an' there warn't a bee in it."

"You want to know *things,* don't you, Peter David!"

"Isn't there *any* place where you can find out about bees—and things like that, Parson?"

"Well," the parson shifted himself on his mule and the mule flapped its ears idly, "there's no way I know for you to get it except through that school. When I was your size I got larnin' hungry, too. It seems like they don't care what

kind of schools the Mountain folks has. But I went to them, and I rode across the mountain to go to them. It was worth it, Peter David. There's no other way I know for you and me to start in larnin' than from some little school like the one you jes' left. Only remember that that's jes' the start, sonny, an' that you're going further with school—down to Mornin'side maybe. And after Mornin'side, mebbe you could go to the city. And some place or other, if you've got the larnin' hunger bad enough, you'll find out what you want to know."

"But it aint right, Parson, to jes' set on a bench all day and read, 'This is a cat.' It's sech a waste o' the Lord's sun!"

"Mebbe it'll be different some day, sonny, but there isn't any other way for you to start now."

Peter David drew a long breath.

"Parson," asked Peter David, "do you suppose, if I did what you say and did get all that larnin', we could start a school in the Mountains, a school where you could larn things—a school that wouldn't be a waste o' time?"

"No, Peter David." The old parson looked sadly down into the valley. "You wouldn't want

to. Them that leaves the Mountains to get larnin' don't never come back."

"Parson," said Peter David with determination, "I'm goin' to do it jes' the same! An' jes' you be lookin' for me to come back!"

Peter David set his corn-meal on his mother's table and called, "Mammy, kin you do me up a bundle and a snack o' somethin'? I'm goin' back to school!"

"What fur?" His mammy came to the door and looked at him.

"Well, I calculate I got to go back, even if it is only a Mountain school and they's got only a li'l gel for a teacher."

"Pap," the woman called, "Pap, Peter David's goin' back to school."

Pap stooped as he came into the little room and looked down at Peter David.

"All right; he kin," he said. "It's good to have somethin' to turn over in your mind o' winter evenin's, and I guess book-larnin'll give you somethin' to think about. But, Peter David, don't you let that li'l gel make you despise the words of your fathers! Use yer own language, won't ye, son?"

"Yes, Pappy, an' some day I'm gonna larn children myself."

About half way over the mountain, Peter David stopped at Mame MacGreagor's for a drink at her well. They talked about his going to school.

"Peter David," she asked suddenly, "ever heard o' Piney Holler?"

"I knew a man who lived thar onct," said Peter David.

"There's a school up thar whar they teach you how to plant corn, and how to make cows live through the winter, and what children ought to eat in the summer; and they show you how to put up corn and greens and things, for the winter. And the teachers—they've been to cities. They'd give you thoughts for the long evenin's by the fire! I had a nephew went thar—Jeff's boy. Why don't you go too?"

"Piney Holler's a long way off," answered Peter David slowly.

"Well," said Mame, "if you got any git up an' go, you can git thar, some way, seems like. My Sam's ridin' down as far as Radnor's, and you

can set along back o' him if you want. I'll be goin' acrost the mountain next week to Ann Pringle's marryin', and I'll tell your pap whar you be!"

Peter David thought hard.

"Reckon I will," he announced suddenly. "It sounds like real larnin', all right. And if you'll tell Pap—"

"I'll tell your pap," promised Mame.

Beyond Radnor's Peter David traveled alone through the October forests, pushing boldly through half-forgotten trails, stepping gaily along dim old wagon-roads, climbing hills, sliding down mountainsides, wading brooks, slipping over and under and around the huge Southern boulders. After five days of this he arrived, a little weary, to be sure, but triumphant, at the door of the schoolhouse. It was a bigger house than he had ever seen in his life before—with funny wire screens at the windows. And there were other little houses scattered around near the big schoolhouse. For one moment Peter David was frightened. Then he walked boldly up to the front door, took a deep breath, and went in.

A door on his left was open. Through it he saw more children than he had ever seen in all his life, sitting at desks and—staring at him.

Then he heard a voice say, "Well, little boy, who are you?" It was the principal.

Peter David smiled politely.

"I'm Peter David," he said, "and I come to larn. I want to start in right now," he went on.

Mr. Clark and Peter David talked a long while.

"I'm very sorry, Peter David," the principal finally said, "but we just haven't any room for you at all. We are way overcrowded even now."

"Yes, sir," said Peter David, "but I got to stay. The parson's countin' on me and—well, I just *got* to git larnin'."

"But there's no bed—no desk—no chair for you," explained the principal.

"Oh, that's all right," Peter David said politely. "I don't need none of them things."

But the principal was firm. The next day he started Peter David on his way home over the mountain—but the day after that Peter David was back again.

"I know how you feel," insisted Peter David,

"but you don't understand. I aim to start a school up at The Forks—and I got to larn somethin' before I start it."

Now, there really wasn't an extra bed, or an extra chair, or an extra desk in that whole school. Every one of the teachers had too many pupils. The principal knew he ought not to take even one more child into the school, but he deliberately said:

"Peter David, you may stay. We'll manage some way. After what I've seen of you, I don't dare let you go."

So it was that Peter David started to school. So it was that Peter David learned how the bees kept house, and how to plant corn in the spring, and how to save fruits for the winter, and what the mountains were made of! He learned other things too. He learned that the world was a very big world, made up of all sorts of people. He learned to read the thoughts of some of these people and of other people who lived a long, long time ago; and he was surprised to find that some of them had thought the very same thoughts he had. And he learned about fractions, and interest, and least common multiples and highest com-

mon denominators. Then one day he stood on the platform and graduated. And even that was not the end, because then he went down to a great school in the city.

It was a late summer day at The Forks. The heat simmered over the road and a few yellow butterflies chased each other in dizzying circles. Three old men sat on the porch of The Forks store, and the parson sat on his mule.

"Well," said he, "I guess we ain't done so bad. We gave good fightin' blood to two wars. I guess this holler ain't got nothin' to duck its head about."

"Yes," said another, "and there's Peter David took every prize there was down at the college in the city. They say there jes' ain't nothin' Peter David don't know."

"I guess his pappy is pretty proud o' him."

"Oh, I don't know. I guess larnin' don't help hoe potatoes or put in the co'n. After you git people larned, you don't git nothin' out of them. They jes' settle down in the city. Eh, Parson?"

The parson jogged his mule with one heel, and rode away.

"They never come back," he thought. "The Mountain folks, when they go to the city, they never come back."

Then, suddenly, he heard a shrill whistle and there was Peter David coming down the road!

"Hi, Parson!" he shouted in welcome. "I was on my way down to The Forks to see if I couldn't find you."

The parson looked into Peter David's eyes.

"You ain't changed your speech none, have you, Peter David?"

"No, Parson," he said. "It's pretty good speakin', an' the words come easy to my mouth. It's powerful good to be back," continued Peter David as he walked along beside the old mule. "When I was down thar in the city, I was always a-thinkin' of you up here—and how the trees were a-turnin', and how the fire would be lightin' up my pappy's cabin, and I'd get too lonesome to sit still, Parson; honest I would. They's only one thing wrong about the Mountains, Parson; the folks don't larn nothin'. They haven't nothin' to do in the evenin's but sit around and sleep, or think about their neighbors. 'Tisn't fair, Parson. I larned lots o' things, down thar."

"That's fine, Peter David." The old parson was silent a minute. "But what good's it goin' to do the Mountains?" he added bitterly—bitterly, that is, for the parson.

"Why, Parson," the young man looked up grinning at the older one, "have you clean forgot?"

"Forgot what?"

"That little school we're goin' to have, you and I? A little school for the Mountains, whar folks will larn somethin'—how to keep bugs out o' the trees, and how to keep babies alive in the summer and—"

"Peter David, d'you mean it?"

"All of us boys who went to Piney Holler are countin' on a new day that's coming to the Mountains," said Peter David, "and you and I, we can't waste no time 'fore we help the children in our holler get ready for it."

"Peter David!" gasped the old parson.

And the two of them, the old man on the mule and the young man at his side, could almost hear the great bell in the school-to-be, as they climbed slowly up the old trail that only Mountain folks can find.

II

OLGA OF RUSSIA

A Little Peasant with the City's Grace

EXCITEMENT hung over the little Russian village of Slaven. The Petronskys were going to America! All week they had packed. All week the children of the village had run hither and thither, reporting just how far the packing had gone. All week little Olga had stood first on one foot, then on the other, watching silently for a while, bursting forth in a flood of questions, and finally running home to tell her father all that was happening.

Olga was different from most children in the village. For one thing, her father loved her. The other fathers were so busy, going to the fields, coming home from the fields, eating, sleeping, that they seemed not to know they had any children. But Olga's father did not go to the

fields. He had time to put his hand on Olga's hair and say, "Oh, my pretty one," in a gentle, yearning way which made his neighbors think him a bit crazy.

Perhaps it was because Olga's father was not like other fathers that he had not been over to see the Petronskys off. He would sit very still when Olga came back, all excited, from the Petronskys' house, and told what was happening.

"Now," she said one day, "they are taking down the great bed. It is a shame, Father, that they cannot take the oven. A new oven will be a great deal of trouble to make. Won't it?"

You see Olga knew how to work quite as well as other little girls. When she was a very tiny girl, she could make the soup and sweep the floor. By the time she was ten, she looked after the house in as businesslike a way as if she were twenty. That was why she knew so much about ovens.

"They do not cook in brick ovens in America, Olga," her father explained.

"Oh!" Olga sat still, one slender bare foot caressing the other. "Oh!" she said again, haltingly. America, she thought, must be a very

strange place, a very queer place, but a very fascinating place.

And then her father sighed a deep, deep sigh. "Promise me, Olga," he said, "that you will never, never, forget me, no matter what may happen."

Olga laughed. How could you forget a person for whom you cooked and swept and sang and danced? And then her heart thumped. Maybe Father was sick—like Peter who was carried away, next door.

"You aren't sick?" Her voice was small with fear.

"No, silly one." Her father smiled, and Olga smiled.

"How could I forget you, little father?" she challenged.

And then her father went out, walking as if he were a little weary. Olga swept behind the door, and stirred the pot of broth, and sang—her face upturned. Olga knew many songs. Her father had come from Moscow and had taught her little carolling street songs, but she liked most of all the songs that the peasants sang in her own village. Now she started a peasant song, a song that had

a beat in the melody like the clap of a big, strong hand or the thump of a heel against a wooden floor. Thump! Thump! And then—stop! For there in the doorway stood her father looking at her.

"Olga," he said, "thou art indeed a little peasant, but thou hast the city's grace."

And then he sat down on the three-legged stool and fell to thinking. Olga was used to this. Often he would fall to thinking and not open his lips for hours. He was a strange man. How he had happened to wander to this little village, no one knew. But he was quiet and gentle, and he did no harm.

"The Petronskys are good people," he said at length.

"Oh, you have been to the Petronskys'. Is the bed all done up then? And are they all packed? Did you talk to Papa Petronsky?"

"Slaven is a very poor little village for you, Olga." Olga was surprised. "It is not good for you to live here. It has bothered me a long time —but I have found a way out."

Olga stood with her long spoon in her hand, open-eyed and wondering.

"You also shall pack, Olga. The Petronskys have promised to take you to America."

The iron spoon clattered to the floor. Olga's father went on unheeding.

"Some day I shall come. Never forget that. Just now there is only room for one—you. And, Olga, go hard to school. America can give you so much. And you can give to America. And when I come, you can teach me, your father, all you have learned." He smiled.

Olga had never been away from her father for one little day. She felt strange and lonely when she thought of life without him. But then he was coming to her. Had he not promised? And the excitement of packing her small belongings, and saying good-by, and dreaming of America, helped her to forget the parting.

Thus it happened that one summer morning they set off—Olga, and the seven Petronskys, and the household goods, and the great bed. Olga wriggled her toes with excitement, but she couldn't wriggle very much because she had shoes on her feet and she was very proud.

She cried when it was time to leave her father,

and clung to him; but by the time she was well on her journey, the tears had dried on her cheeks, and her eyes were dancing in her interest in the new sights.

America was very much stranger and queerer than Olga had ever imagined. The Petronskys settled down in New York, in a little tenement house near the river, where you could hear the noisy signaling of steamboats as they passed each other in the dark. Their deep-throated bellowing frightened the little Russian girl in her sleep, and she would wake up and long for the little room at home and for her father sitting silent before the fire. Outside the window there was a train, called an "elevated," built high above the street. She was afraid of that, too. She would lie in her bed and listen to it while it was still a long way off. Then it would seem to rush right at her, and the room would shake! Then the rumble would die suddenly away. It was like some demon in a peasant tale.

In the daytime Olga went to school, and worked very hard to learn English; and after school she helped Mama Petronsky. Mama Petronsky was afraid of the New World, too,

and would quake at the passing of the train. Somehow the saints in the corner seemed less able to protect them in New York than in Russia.

But there was one thing Olga could hold to in the strange New World: her father wrote to her regularly. He wrote her about Maria and how she had been sick that winter, and what Andrew was doing, and how the soup did not taste the same since she had gone, and how he missed her songs, and how he would come to New York with the spring—and how they would live happily ever after.

Olga kept these letters under her bed and read them until they were in tatters. She read them to the whole family, and Mama Petronsky would smile and shake her head. Sometimes she would cry out of sheer homesickness over the news. The letters made Slaven seem very close. In imagination she could see their neighbors going up the dirt road to work. Olga could catch the smell of the earth, and hear the chickens crow in the village street. And a great longing for Russia would come over her.

So the days passed.

But there came a day when Papa Petronsky

lost his job—a black day with many like it in the months that followed. Every night Mama Petronsky asked, "Did you find work today?" and every night Papa Petronsky stood silent and looked at her dully, until at length his wife stopped asking. All the little family had to live on was the money that Olga's father sent for her board and care. They moved to a still smaller home, and day after day crept by, hopeless days, long drawn out.

And then, after they had moved to the new home, the letters from Olga's father stopped coming. Olga would stand in front of the door until the last possible moment before school, just to see whether the postman would stop. He never did. She would run breathlessly home from school to see whether there was a letter there. But when, week after week, no letter came, she no longer ran at all.

One day as she was going home very, very slowly, she heard some music. She stopped. A hurdy-gurdy was playing the melody with the beat in it like the clap of a big, strong hand or the thump of a heel against a wooden floor. For

a moment she stood there, her hand against her throat. The children in the street had started to dance. Olga's foot beat time, then she swung into the circle. Once more she was a little peasant girl in her village, a little peasant girl with the city's grace. She did not realize that the other children had stopped dancing. She had forgotten the city street; she was home, home again in Russia! Then the music stopped—and suddenly it was just New York again, with a ring of children's faces about her—strange faces in a strange world! Slaven and her father were far away, like a dream that would never be dreamed again.

"Where did you learn to dance like that?" It was a kind voice, a low voice. And it suddenly brought tears into Olga's eyes, tears that spilled and fell down her solemn face. The woman knelt down and put her arms around Olga, while the little girl poured out her story in Russian and English all mixed up together. The children of the street drew around about—an interpreting, interested circle.

"She says, teacher, her fadder, he ain' written to her."

"Her fadder's in Russia."

"They's poor at home. He ain' got no job."

"Her fadder was comin' in spring, she says, and it's spring. He ain' come."

The teacher left the little circle and came home with Olga. Up the narrow, dark stairs she came, Olga's hand fast in hers.

"Why didn't you come to us at the church right away?" the teacher asked pantingly on the last flight. "Didn't you know that the church is there to help you?"

"No, I didn't even know you was there," explained Olga and felt somehow at peace.

Of course, Papa Petronsky had not known that he should have left an address with the postman so that letters could be forwarded. Of course Papa Petronsky had not dreamed that the little church on the corner might help him to find a job. His words tumbled over themselves now that there was someone to whom he could tell his troubles. Olga translated as best she could. And with the relief of words, courage and cheerfulness crept into the Petronsky home. Help, it seemed, was near! And for the first time America seemed like home.

It was a hot day two months later. A long line of people waited in the sun where the ferry comes over from Ellis Island. Occasionally they mopped their faces and cried out against the heat in a hundred different tongues. But there was one person in all that mob who did not know that it was hot. All she knew was that in a few minutes the gate would swing open and—there would be her father! Olga's eyes shone. Beneath her breath she sang the song of the village. Over and over she sang it.

And then he came! She had forgotten how wonderful he was. He put his hand on her hair and said, "Oh, my pretty one!" in tones she had known so well, and quick tears came to her eyes.

"The good saints have brought you to us," said Mama Petronsky, crossing her expansive bosom.

"No," said Olga, "the teacher from the little church has brought you to us."

"It's the same thing," said Mama Petronsky, and Olga laughed.

Then, seeing her father looking up at the elevated railway, she said: "That is 'the elevated,' Father. You take it to go places. Do not be

afraid: it will not hurt you. Besides, I am with you, you know."

Everyone smiled as the little family climbed the steps to "the elevated," and it was no longer only her father who saw in Olga the little peasant with the city's grace.

III

PEDRO OF THE DESERT

PEDRO lived where there was plenty of room—which is a good thing sometimes. He could see away and away and away, and everything looked the same. A desert—brown, unchanging, with purple shadows in the evening, which must have been magic, because there was nothing to cast shadows. A sky—cloudless, blue all the day, with great stars at night.

Pedro was happy. He had four sisters and a baby brother, and on the whole he liked them. Of course, Rosa had an irritating habit of helping herself to his choicest possessions; and Juanita had once had the courage to slap him—a courage at which she never failed to wonder; and Carmelita had said, "You think you're smart just because you're a boy, don't you!" Irritating enough, even though Spanish words *are* soft—even angry Spanish words!

But such things happened seldom, and Pedro was usually leader among the other Mexican children. They all lived in a little adobe house,—a house made out of something like mud,—with a shrine in the corner before which there was always a lighted candle. As Pedro's sisters passed before the shrine, they bobbed their little heads. Occasionally Pedro passed without bobbing, to the horror of the whole family, who predicted that horrible, horrible, horrible things would happen as a result. At which, Pedro sniffed and stuck his chest out for very boldness, though inside he was a little frightened. He would make it up by being particularly nice to the shrine when no one was about.

Carmelita, who held him in scarcely any awe, and was thus particularly annoying to Pedro, once said, "I see you, Pedro, making your peace with the Holy Mother. You just try to show off before us!" And, of course, that made Pedro very, very angry—much too angry even to slap Carmelita. He was so angry that he simply turned his back.

Pedro's mother was large and fat and wore many clothes, so that you sometimes wondered

how she could ever get into them all. She swished about the room, and hardly ever scolded. If you did something wrong,—slap!—went her broad, firm hand. If you did something right, she smiled at you. Secretly, Pedro liked his mother's smile very much. She had kind, big eyes and nice teeth, and her skin was brown and warm. Sometimes she would kiss Pedro on both cheeks. He really liked this very much, but he would not for the world have shown it. He would stand as straight as a small stick. His mother would then give him a playful little push, laugh a little, and say, "Pedro, he is not one for kisses!" All of which was embarrassingly delightful to Pedro.

Pedro had a little donkey called Diavalo. It was when he was on Diavalo's back that he was happiest of all. They would scamper across the desert, with a sharp eye out for gopher holes, until they had reached the deepest, most purple shadow, where they were no more than one moving dot to the children left behind. Diavalo would allow Pedro to do all sorts of things—to stand on his back (although the skin on his back was loose as that of a dog), to slip underneath between his legs, to ride backward, or to lie down

against his neck. And Diavalo seemed to love all this quite as much as Pedro.

But this was before Manuel came to live in the little adobe house next door to Pedro's. Manuel lacked but a month of being nine years old,—Pedro's own age,—but he could not scamper off to the purple-shadowed horizon as fast as Pedro, and his mother did not kiss him, and laugh, and push him away as Pedro's did. But Manuel had some things Pedro did not, and Pedro's place as leader was lost.

For Manuel knew how to read! And Manuel knew how to write!

At first Pedro said, "You're making it all up, Manuel!" But one day the *padre* came by on his old white mule, saw Manuel writing, and stopped. "That is good, my son," he said, "and here is a book for you." And he gave Manuel a Prayer Book, which made Pedro tingle all over with envy.

"You can't fight me, Manuel," he threw out challengingly.

"But you can't read or write," replied Manuel, calmly, and all of Pedro's sisters chanted

derisively, "But you can't read or write, Pedro!"

And Juanita begged, "Write me my name, Manuel." And Rosa teased, "Read the little prayer, Manuel." And Carmelita remarked, "Pedro is angry because he can't read or write."

At last Pedro asked his mother whether he might go to school. She laughed and kissed him and asked, "What, my Pedro; you want to leave your mother and Diavalo?" And she smiled again so that the tears were near his eyes, which is extremely unmanly as everyone knows.

But, after that, the idea of going to school was never out of Pedro's mind. One day a lank, tall man whom the grown folks called a "missionary," passed the little house and stopped. Pedro and all the sisters were off behind the house. The girls would not come up, because they were afraid of missionaries—perhaps because they had never known any. But Pedro walked right up to the tall man.

"Please, sir," said Pedro with his best tone, "I want to go to school."

"What's this—what's this?" asked the tall, lank missionary, looking down at the little boy.

"Haven't you a school for boys like me?" Pedro's voice quavered: "I heard you had a school. Haven't"—a big swallow—"you a school for boys like me? I just *have* to go to school, I just *have* to!"

Now don't think that Pedro went to school right away off, just as soon as he asked to go. First the missionary had to talk to the boy's mother a long time, and then he talked to Pedro's father a long time, and then he talked to Manuel's father a long time, and then he rode away. After what seemed to Pedro a very, very long time indeed, the missionary came back again, and this time he took Pedro to school.

Pedro was happy, although he hated to leave Diavalo and his mother, and he even kissed Carmelita on both cheeks and promised to learn to write her name. After he had gone, life at home went on just about the same. The little girls played about, and Manuel learned to ride Diavalo almost as well as Pedro and, except that Pedro's mother was always praying for him, Pedro might almost have never been. Manuel was leader.

But there came one day—oh! long, long after Pedro had gone away—when the children saw a

On Diavalo's back Manuel and Pedro scampered away to where the shadows are deep and purple.

speck on the horizon where the shadows are deepest; and the speck grew larger and larger and larger, until suddenly Carmelita cried, "Oh! Mama, Mama, it's Pedro—our Pedro!" And Rosa and Juanita and Marie and the baby—who really wasn't the baby any more now that there was another baby—all cried, "Pedro—our Pedro!"

Only Manuel was very quiet.

Pedro was kissed and petted, and he was very, very happy. He read Spanish out of his father's old book, and he read English out of a book of his own, and he wrote all the names of all the children, and he showed where Manuel had left the "e" out of Carmelita.

Poor Manuel grew quieter and quieter, and at last he said, "I guess my mother wants me."

"Oh, stay, Manuel," urged Pedro, his chest stuck out. "Stay until the stars come out, and I'll tell you their names." But Manuel went home just the same.

The stars came out bigger and brighter than ever before, and the sisters begged, "Tell us their names—tell us their names!" But Pedro did not feel like sticking out his chest just then.

There had been many things taught at the school besides reading and writing and the names of the stars. One was, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." It had been explained to the boys. Pedro could see the teacher yet, tall and thin, with quiet eye. "Everything wicked in the world," the teacher had said, "comes from disobeying this rule." Pedro felt suddenly hot and lonely and ashamed—bitterly ashamed.

At last he slipped away from the girls and ran over to Manuel's house.

"Manuel!" he called softly. "Manuel!" And then he talked fast, as though he had been running a long time: "I was showing off, Manuel. I know hardly *anything*. The teachers, they know lots more'n me! Come on out. You teach me—I'll teach you—and next year we'll go away to school together!"

And suddenly Manuel came out.

"I'm glad you've come back, Pedro," he said. "A boy gets awfully sick of girls all the time."

"Manuel and Pedro think they're smart just because they're boys," said Carmelita a few days later.

Manuel and Pedro grinned at each other as they both jumped on the back of Diavalo and scampered away to where the shadows are the deepest and the most purple on the great Southwestern desert.

IV

THE WINTER OF NIGHT

THE snow was falling when Dan landed—thump!—on the dock of a little fishing village in Alaska.

"He's a stowaway," explained the captain, giving Dan a last shake, "and the meanest kid that ever lived. I knew there was a school here that kept kids for the winter. There's no other boats back to where he come from this season, so I put in here with him. This ship ain't no place for kids, see?"

The wharfman grasped Dan by the collar of his coat, a coat yards and yards too big for him.

"Who are you?" he asked, glancing at Dan.

Dan looked back steadily at the wharfman—and spat.

"Where'd you come from?" Dan's face was like stone.

"Am I goin' to have to shake it out of you?"

Dan's face showed faint interest.

"Oh, he's the darnedest kid you ever see," put in the captain. "I pity the school that gets him!"

And that was Dan's introduction to Nokomo.

He didn't care; or if he cared, he gave no sign. Can you imagine a boy of nine going on ten, or ten going on eleven, and small for his age, without any mother, or any father, or anyone at all, —a little boy standing in the bleak cold of a little village in Alaska and not caring a rap what was going to happen? Well, if Dan cared, he didn't show it.

You see, before he was a stowaway—a stowaway, you know, is a person who hides on board a ship because he hasn't money enough to pay his passage—before he was a stowaway, he had lived with his father in another little Alaskan village farther north. Whether he had ever had a mother or not he did not know, but it stands to reason that he must have had one some time, because everyone has had a mother at some time or other. Anyway Dan couldn't remember having had a mother. His father had had a big hand, and Dan had learned early how to keep away from it. Once some missionary people had come

to that little town where he lived. One of them had talked to Dan for just a few minutes. Afterwards Dan's pap had given him a licking for having had anything to do with the missionaries.

"There ain't no God," he had told Dan, "and those that says there is, is liars. Don't you have nothing to do with people who says they're tryin' to do good to you, because they ain't. Everyone looks out for himself in this world."

Then one day the father died—quick, and Dan had been scared. It was then that he had taken the great overcoat, had stolen down to the harbor, and had crept aboard the ship that had been unloading all day at the wharf. The boat was too far out to take him back when the captain had found him. And that was how Dan had come to be dumped on the dock at Nokomo.

On the way to the little school dormitory, Dan never opened his mouth once. And he stood in silence while the wharfman told Dan's story to the woman who opened the door—only the wharfman didn't know as much of the story as we do.

And then Dan heard something that made him start. He heard the wharfman say, "And I thought you folks, being missionaries like, would

take him in." At the word *missionary,* Dan gave a little jump. The worst thrashing he had ever had, had been given him for talking to a missionary. Now the mere word was enough to make him turn on his heel to run away. But the snow was falling. In Alaska you don't run away when the snow is falling—even the smallest child knows that—and Dan knew plenty of stories of men who had got lost forever in snow storms.

It may be that Dan felt more than he showed. For just then he looked up at this woman missionary, and got another shock. Instead of looking at him with a "you-poor-little-boy smile," she was actually looking at him with a "let's-have-some-fun smile!" He was almost tricked into smiling himself. But he didn't.

"Why, of course I'll take him in," the missionary said. "We'll have to, on a night like this. Come in," she said to Dan, and "Good-by, Mr. Slocum," to the wharfman.

So Dan entered school.

Such a winter as it was! In the old days Dan had dreaded winters for then his father had sat with a bottle at his elbow and had talked wild;

and Dan had been cold, and sometimes hungry, and always afraid. All summer long he had dreaded the winter of night.

But this winter was different. In the first place, there were the warm homely things—the warmth of the beds, the savory food, the sweet cleanliness of the rooms. Then there were the classes, the picture books, the stories of the sea, and the games the children played. Not that Dan played very much himself, but secretly he liked to watch the others play. And after school was over, and studies, and supper, all the children sat about the big fire, and sang, and told stories, and everyone was happy.

There were other things that were not so happy, things that had a trick about them, things that made him remember suddenly his father's last injunction,—things that made him feel guilty about being with the missionaries at all.

One of these was the grace at table. Before they ate, all the children bowed their heads and thanked the Heavenly Father. But Dan sat stiff as a poker.

"Dan," the teacher had explained, the night of his arrival at the school, "we bow our heads

before we eat, to thank God." Dan's chin had gone firm.

"There ain't no God!" he had said.

All the other children had gone goggle-eyed at this, but the teacher had merely said, "Help yourself to the bread, James, and pass it to Dan."

"You *ain't* goin' to make me good!" Dan threatened, during the winter, and he went clear out of his way to be bad. It took a good deal of trouble to think up anything bad to do, but he remembered his father and tried hard not to be good. Occasionally, though, the teacher would catch him lifting the littlest girl into her seat at the table. And one evening when they were roasting apples before the fire, the littlest girl dropped her apple down behind the burning log, and she began to cry. Instantly Dan crawled around behind the hot log and got it for her. Then when he caught the teacher smiling at him, he went red and pretended he had to tie his shoe.

"I won't be good," he said to her later, for all the world as if she had said, "I'll thrash you if you don't try to be good"—which of course she would never say at all. And under his breath he

added defiantly, "There ain't no God, and missionaries is liars." Of course he just said it because he was embarrassed, and because he was afraid of liking a missionary, and because his father had said there was no God. But no matter how bad he was, the teacher never raised her hand, or her voice. It ran contrary to all of Dan's teaching. Dan knew there was some trick to it, and he promised himself he would not be caught. Let the rest of the kids sing and smile and say grace if they wanted to—but not he—never!

He tried hard, for his father's sake, not to be like the missionaries, but all the time he was growing gentler and gentler, and more and more helpful, so that before long the children actually came to love and depend upon him.

So, the long Alaskan winter wore by, with its long black nights, and its pale sickly sun in a queer gray day. There was some talk of the spring thawing. The children talked about it in the evening as they sat around the fire. Almost before they knew it the sky seemed warmer and the days longer. Everyone was glad. The winter of night would soon be going.

Then suddenly two dreadful things came at the same time.

The first was measles. Where they came from no one knew, but little Anna caught them, and then Jimmy, and then almost everyone. The school had to be closed, and the teacher who lived at the dormitory kept nursing children, and making broth, and telling stories, and singing—to keep the children happy.

And who do you think helped her? Why, Dan, of course! Not openly; rather on the sly—as if he were both proud and ashamed of helping, and were afraid of being caught. Anyway, he helped keep the fire going, he helped wash the dishes, and he kept things neat; and he tried to keep the littlest girl quiet so the others could sleep. You see, the littlest girl was one of the few who did not have the measles.

And the second thing was the storm. It was as if winter had said, "Humph, they think night is over, do they? I'll show them!" And such a storm! It pried at the doors and windows with its icy fingers. It shook the dormitory, and howled like a hungry beast about the chimney. If you opened the door, it cut down to your

lungs, so cruel it was. But no one ever opened the door.

Now one day while Dan was in the kitchen, trying to keep the littlest girl out from under foot, the storm got very bad and blew the door wide open. Of course, everyone, except those who were in bed with the measles, rushed out to close the door. Then they all rushed back to the little sick children.

Dan turned to look for the littlest girl. The littlest girl had disappeared! She had been there just a minute before—she had been tagging right along beside him! She was always tagging right along beside him!

Dan looked everywhere for her, under the table, behind the big rocker, in the jam closet. He could not find her. Again he looked, this time frantically. She could not have gone out the door. How *could* she have gone out that door?—But where else could she have gone?

It would not do to let the teacher worry. She had about all she could do now, nursing so many children through the measles. He must take the responsibility himself. So he bundled up carefully and squeezed quietly out the little door, so

no one would hear. He knew storms; they were hard and cruel, and would show no mercy to the littlest girl.

It was after a weary, desperate search of several hours that Dan was brought back into the little dormitory. A trapper and Mr. Slocum had found him fallen in a drift. "He's a bad sort," said Slocum. "And he must be a little cracked—to run away in a storm like this."

The teacher straightened up and looked at Slocum. "Dan is a good boy," she said hotly, "and if he ran away, he had some reason to."

It was some time later that Dan opened his eyes. "The littlest girl?" he asked anxiously, and his voice was little more than a whisper.

"Yes, dear, what is it?" asked the teacher.

"The littlest girl!" he cried frantically, and tried to sit up. "Out there—she's out there in the storm!"

"Out of his head," thought the teacher; but aloud she said, "Why, the littlest girl is in her bed asleep, Danny."

"But she went out there!" He pointed to the door. "She went out into the storm! I went out after her, and—I couldn't—find her!"

"Did you look behind the woodbox, Danny? She was playing behind the woodbox, when we discovered that you had gone out."

They got it, finally, all straightened out.

"Danny," said the teacher impulsively, "you're the kind of a boy that makes all my work and all my hardships worth while. You're so—good!" And her voice broke.

"No, I'm not," said Danny brusquely. Then he suddenly snuggled up to her. "But—I'm sorry I—said there was no God. You see, Father always said there wasn't any. I guess Father must have been mistaken. I wish—I wish that Father could have known."

"I think he knows now, Danny; and I think he's glad you know there is a God."

"And that missionaries aren't liars!" added Danny, with a shy twinkle in his eye.

V

THE PRIDE OF A SAVIONE

THE baby was crying—not a nice, sleepy cry, nor a loud, lusty cry, but a little, fretful, whining, sick cry. And Rose did not know what to do. Her mother had gone out—oh, ever so long ago, while it was still light and the sun flooded the floor. Now it was dark. A shadow crept out and lay menacingly at Rose's feet. Outside the street lamp flickered—now lighting, now darkening the room.

Next door Rose could hear the Allegritos having supper. She had heard them come home. First the children, loud talking, with quick running steps; then the father, deep and gruff, with heavy steps; then the young lady daughter, with high voice and clicking steps. Rose could smell the supper—the rich meaty odor. They would be having spaghetti flavored with meat and tomato sauce and cheese.

When Rose's mother went out, Rose had asked, "Shall I start the supper, Mom?"

And Rose's mother had replied, "There is no supper for us tonight, if I can't make this into money." She had showed Rose a piece of paper that father had sent them, and she had added fiercely, "And don't tell the neighbors!"

Rose was not too young to know why. Gossip creeps in a tenement house, upstairs and downstairs and in among the corners, until all the grandmothers, and all the grandfathers, and all the fathers, and mothers, and children say:

"The Saviones are pretty far down! That man Savione—he is a worthless fellow. They had no supper tonight."

Rose knew how the shame would cover her face. Rose knew much for a little girl going on nine.

She pressed her head against the wall between her home and the Allegritos. She sniffed. She was very hungry. But she did not cry. Mrs. Allegrito would gladly give her some supper if she said, "Please, my baby is sick, and my mother has not come home, and I'm hungry."

But she remembered she was a Savione.

Saviones do not show their troubles to the world. She would not "make a shame" of her mother, even if they found them both—her and the baby—lying dead on the floor. So Rose sat, and sniffed, and listened, and rocked the baby—back and forth, back and forth. Occasionally she broke into a little song.

"Hush—hush—hush—hush—hush—baby, hush."

Which she varied with soft implorings, "Shut up, can't youse? *Please* shut up!" For a moment she contemplated slapping the baby—a good, hearty slap. And she would have slapped it, if the baby had cried loud, lusty cries; but this pitiful little whine caught at her heart and made it stand still with fright.

"Suppose," she thought wildly to herself, "suppose my mother would never come back—and suppose my baby would die like the Castroni's baby!"

She thought of the Castronis when their baby died. She thought of the mother and father sitting by the coffin, and the candles, and the crêpe, and the purple-fringed curtains. And she rocked the baby harder than ever.

It grew darker and darker. The stove no longer threw a shadow. It was just a hulk of deepest black,—against the gray black of the wall.

"Shut up!—*Won't* youse?" implored Rose, and she strained her ears for the sound of a returning footstep.

Next door the Allegritos washed the dishes. She could hear the splash of the water. She could hear the rough tumbles of the boys and the smack, smack of a parental hand. That was Tony and Joe fighting, and Papa Allegrito settling the fight. Once in a while she heard the hoarse cry of Mama Allegrito raised against the clamor of voices. Then the door opened and shut. That was the boys going down to play in the street. Then Papa Allegrito left to take his smoke down in front, and to keep the baby out of Mama Allegrito's way for a time. Then the young lady daughter clicked out. All was quiet save the slap, slap of Mama Allegrito's iron.

Once someone came and rattled the door hard. Rose covered the baby's mouth with her skirt and sat still, with her heart thumping and bounding so that her whole body quivered. The baby was

not crying any more. It felt hot, like a little stove pressed against Rose's chest. It threw its head back this way, that way. Oh, the tossing was bad for it! Very bad! Only last summer Rose had gone to a Little Mother's Club at a church near by. And she knew some things very well indeed. She knew that the baby was hot not because it was wrapped up too much, nor because the room was too warm, but because it had a fever which sent a burning fire tingling through the tiny veins. The Castroni's baby had burned like this before it died! And the teacher had said—

Suddenly Rose had an idea. The teacher! The teacher could do something for the baby! The teacher would not tell the neighbors. Perhaps the teacher could find Rose's mother. But to get to the teacher and let no one see her—that was the problem.

First she waited until she heard Papa Allegrito come home. Then she heard the window go up in the next room, and Mama Allegrito called, "Joe! Tony!" Joe and Tony came tramping upstairs. A murmur in the next room—then quiet. Rose moved softly—first one foot, then

the other, carefully—and covered the baby with a shawl. Once a board squeaked, and she stood still half a minute with her hand over the baby's mouth. She reached on tiptoe for the key hanging over the door. She opened the door softly and put her head out. No one in sight! She closed the door behind her and crept down the stairs. When she got to the street door, she pinned the shawl over the baby's head and ran like a quail before a hunter. In between the trucks, behind push-carts, around people, she ran —surely, swiftly, desperately.

"Please, teacher, take my baby!" she gasped to the woman who opened the door at the church settlement. "Please take him, 'cause he's sick; he's *awful* sick. An' I gotta go home."

"Here, wait a minute." The teacher caught the arm of the swiftly disappearing Rose. "Wait a minute." She pulled the child into the hall. "Now you wait right here until I turn your baby over to the nurse. Do you understand?"

So Rose stood, anxiously. She had to get home to let her mother in! What would her mother think? She had to get home—she had to get home! Oh, she hoped the baby would not die!

"Now suppose you tell me about it." The teacher was back.

"I gotta get home." Rose was gentle, but firm.

"Why?"

"To let my mother in. She's gone out."

"How long has she been out?"

"Oh, a long time—ever since this afternoon; now I gotta go."

"Why did she go?"

"Because, instead of sending money to us, my father, he sent us a piece of paper, and he said that could be made into money, and my mother she went to see, and she hasn't got back; and I gotta go home."

"Did the baby have any supper?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did you?"

"No, ma'am. Only please don't tell the Allegritos!—Oh, *please!* 'Cause they'd laugh, and they said anyway, because my father went away, that's the last we'd ever hear from him. You won't tell?" Rose was almost crying. The teacher smiled reassuringly.

"Miss Harper," she called to one of the assist-

ants, "will you take Rose's key and slip over to the Savione's and stay until Mrs. Savione returns? Mrs. Savione went out to cash a check. And don't let the Allegritos know, will you? Rose and I are having supper together."

The baby's fever was down. The mother had been found—weary, and dismayed at the strange customs of a new land in regard to changing paper into money.

"If only you had known that you could come to us!" exclaimed Miss Harper. "That's what the church is for. We can get that money for you without any trouble. If you will come over to the church now, we will get your baby and Rose for you. And the nurse wants to tell you some things about the baby."

Rose lifted her face as her mother came in the door. "Mom," she said simply. And then, excitedly, "I had spaghetti for supper, with a napkin—the teachers are awful nice! And, Mom, the Allegritos never found out I hadn't nuthin' to eat! They'll *never* find out, Mom."

And Mrs. Savione smiled at Rose—Rose's head was nodding again—and she smiled at the

church teacher who could understand why she didn't want the Allegritos to know she had no money. And then she turned to the nurse who had "some things" to tell her about the baby.

"Please, teacher, take my baby," Rose gasped.

VI

OLAF OF THE BEET FIELDS

OLAF'S first memories went back to a great kitchen ruled by a fat, flour-besmeared, smiling man who was his father. And the smells that arose from that kitchen! And the variety of cakes! Cakes that were allowed to harden over straws and which, at the first crispy bite you took, crumbled into richness in your mouth; little hard cakes that were chewy; cakes as light as froth; brown, jolly ginger cakes!

But better than the kitchen had been the store in front. There all the little cakes were laid out in trays. Olaf's comfortable mother had stood behind the counter, and in exchange for money had given out little bags of cakes to be taken home. There had been a warm, clean, pleasant odor about this shop, and Olaf had dreamed of the day when he would stand behind the counter in front, or stir around with his father in the back

of the shop, enveloped in a great white apron, with a cap on his head and his arms covered with flour. Already his big brother had begun to learn the secrets of the famous kitchen: so much butter, so many eggs, so much flour, and—dear to Olaf's heart—so much white, glistening sugar.

But these were memories of days long gone by, of things that had happened in a country other than America. The father and mother no longer ran their little shop. They had been taken away by a dread disease that stalked the world during the Great War. And Olaf and his brother had left their home and set out in a big ship to seek their fortune.

When they reached New York, Olaf's brother decided that the West needed bakers. And so, with his head full of magic secrets made of the whites of twelve eggs, butter the size of an English walnut, two cups of sugar, and the like, the two boys set out for Denver.

Olaf hardly looked away from the window on the train. Never, in all his life, had he seen a country where there was so much room. He counted the little gopher holes they passed. And

he sang under his breath—because he and his big brother had set out to seek their fortune in a new land. He had seen the first blue shadows against the sky, he had watched them grow into mountains—and he was happy.

Now Denver is a beautiful city and a city of hospitality. But, like other American cities, it would not have a young cake-maker without references and without money enough to set himself up in business. The young cake-maker knew very little about the English language, and his money soon filtered away.

"Ach!" said a neighbor who had come from the same part of the world as Olaf. "This is not as wonderful as we had dreamed. But I can help you out, my friend. It will soon be time to set out for the beet fields. I will take you with my family, and you can help us."

"The beet fields?" asked Olaf's brother.

"We go every year. They use the beets to make sugar. It will be as a farm. Outdoor work. Enough work for both you and Olaf. It will be good for you."

Olaf was crazy with delight. Country! A chance to help his brother! To help make the

white shining sugar that he had seen his father pour into the mixing bowl! Eagerly he counted the days until they set forth.

At first the clear, crisp air and the blue of the sky over the fields delighted Olaf. That was before he was put to beet topping.

In beet topping he went out with a knife, and he pulled up the beet and cut off the top. You had to be very careful because the knife was very sharp, and sometimes it cut your hand. For example, there was little Rudolph, a good worker even though he was only seven years old, who cut his hand. Olaf had not noticed Rudolph's hands until he cut them. They were big, for a boy of his age, and toughened—like a man's, but they were the hands of a very little boy. And Rudolph had already been in the fields for two years!

All day Olaf worked in the row next Rudolph's; and the little insects in the fields whirred; and sometimes they flew up against his hot cheek stingingly. Occasionally the perspiration fell into his eyes. He forgot to look at the sky. All he thought about was getting to the end of the

row. But at night he dreamed of great piles of white beet sugar—and cakes that children ate.

About this time he began to see things before his eyes, and his throat seemed to be always dry. It hurt him to stand up straight, and he did not talk much. It took too much time. Always there was that end of the row before him; he had to reach the end of the row before his work was over!

One day all the children were called together.

"Listen," said the neighbor who had first got Olaf and his brother their work. "Today the inspector is coming. He will ask you if your work is hard, if you have enough to eat, if you have enough sleep. Be careful. If you do not answer rightly, you will lose your jobs."

So Olaf and the other children stood before the inspector. He did not look cruel, thought Olaf. He did not look as if he would take away their jobs. Olaf wished he did not feel so dizzy. With this buzzing in his ears he did not know whether he could answer right or not. And now the inspector was looking at him.

"How old are you?"

"Ten going on eleven."

"Do you find the work too hard?" he asked.

"No, sir." Was that the right answer?

"What makes you stand so queerly? Can't you stand straight?"

The buzzing was louder in Olaf's ears. He stood straight—straight as an arrow—before he crumpled and fell to the ground.

"Ten—going on eleven," said the inspector as he picked little Olaf up. And then he added, "Most children last more than one summer in the beet fields."

There followed a long nightmare for Olaf. It seemed as if he were forever topping beets down a long, long row. And at the end of that row was a great mountain of cakes that other children, and even men and women, came up and ate. But Olaf could never get to it.

And then one morning he woke up and the nightmare was gone. He looked around wonderingly. Where was he? A white-capped person moved about at the far end of the room. He must be in a hospital! Dimly he remembered. He had fainted; he must have lost his job because he had fainted!

"Olaf!" It was his brother bending over him.

"I fainted," said Olaf. "I'm so sorry. Did we lose our jobs?"

"It's all right," the brother smiled. "I got a new job. I am making cakes. We'll save money and some day we'll have a shop all our own—what? Famous makers of cakes—you and me, Olaf!"

Olaf wearily shook his head. Again he saw the long row of beets and the cakes he could never reach. Again he saw the white piles of sugar, and little Rudolph's hands after he had cut them with the knife.

"I don't make cakes," he said. "Too many kids got to help."

One day the inspector came to call on Olaf.

"Olaf," he said, "your brother tells me you will have nothing to do with cake making."

"Too many little kids like Rudolph got to help," said Olaf. "Too many kids got to cut beets for the sugar. And the sun is hot, and the bugs fly against your eyes."

"Olaf," the inspector took Olaf's little tired hands in his, "don't you want to help the little kids? If you get well and strong and go to

school, and help your brother, some day you'll be a man; and then you can help bring it about that no child be allowed in a beet field. Will you help me do this?"

Suddenly Olaf looked up at the inspector and smiled.

"I'd do *anything,*" he said, "to help kids like Rudolph get out o' the beet fields."

VII

JOHN HENRY, HAM-CURER

JOHN HENRY was born in a little ramshackle cabin down South. From the time he knew anything, he wanted to go to school. But he had never had the right chance. Of course there were schools of a sort for the colored folk in his community; there are in most southern communities. But they weren't very good schools. White children went to school, of course. But nobody cared very much whether colored children went to school or not, and even the Negroes themselves did not care very much.

So here was John Henry, bright as a new penny, just a-hankering and a-pining to go to school, and no one cared a whit—except his old grandpap.

Not that John Henry's grandpap had ever gone to school himself, but he was fond of John Henry. He liked the cute way John Henry

caught on to things. He liked to watch John Henry's smile flash like a ray of sun across the night of his face. And, secretly, he was proud that anyone belonging to him should want book learning. None of his own children had ever wanted it. But here was John Henry, bursting with the desire to read and to write and to study arithmetic.

"If only ah could go to a *real* school, Grandpap!" yearned the boy.

John Henry's grandpap sat and studied.

After the old man had studied for a spell, he took his staff from the corner and his wide-brimmed hat from the nail on the door and set off down the road.

He walked pretty spry for an old man, and it was not long before he came to the turn in the road that led up to the Great House. At this turn he stopped, wiped his forehead, and took a deep, full breath.

"John Henry needs an eddication," he said firmly to himself, "and he's jes' gwine to git it."

The old master of the Great House was surprised to see the old man come limping up the walk. It had been a long time since the old

"If only ah could go to a real school, Grandpap!" yearned John Henry.

Negro had called. The old master had always liked John Henry's grandpap. He could remember back to the time before ever John Henry's mammy had been born, when the old man had been the spryest of all the steppers at the colored dances. And he remembered how the young Negro, his woolly head nodding over the violin, his foot tapping the floor in time with the music, had played for the white dances when he, the master, was young.

"Howdy, Uncle Jose," Old Master said cordially, "What brings you out this day of heat? I'd think you'd be sitting some place in the shade, letting that grandson of yours wait on you."

"Well, suh," said Uncle Jose, dropping down on the last steps of the verandah, "dat's jes' what ah come to see yuh about."

"Is that so?" The old master was used to having all the colored folks in the country bring their troubles to him.

"I hope your grandson isn't giving you any trouble, Uncle Jose. He looked like a real smart little fellow the last time I saw him."

"Dat's jes' what he is, suh," explained Uncle Jose. "He's smart, but ah wants him to be

smarter dan dat. Ah'd lak to make a preachuh out o' dat chile o' mine, suh. But preachuhs, dey got to hab larnin'—leastways if deys good fo' somethin'. Now dat boy o' mine," the old man hitched himself up a little higher on the step, "he jes' nacherly got no place to larn. Look at dat niggah school; aint got no teachuh half de time. Od'duh half, dey got teachuh who doan know nuffin' at all. Dat chile are got to hab a teachuh who knows. So ah comes to you, suh."

Uncle Jose waited anxiously.

"You say your boy's real smart, Uncle Jose?"

"He's keen cuttin', suh, lak a whip."

"Well, you're a good man, Uncle Jose, and I guess I can take a chance on your youngster. I'll send him away to school for you, where he'll learn something."

It was late afternoon when Uncle Jose reached home, but in his soul was solemn joy.

"Some day ma li'l John Henry'll be a preachuh —and he'll win men's souls," he said to himself.

Time passed. Uncle Jose sat in the sun on cool days, in the shade on warm days. He watched the butterflies chasing each other over the road, and listened to the birds a-fussing in

the trees. Sometimes he dozed lightly. And sometimes he got out his staff and his broad-brimmed hat, and walked over to the Great House. He always did that when he had a letter from John Henry. And he would sit sucking in his cheeks while the old master read it to him, the light of glory in his eyes.

"What a preachuh he'll be, suh," he said, "a-standin' up thar in the pulpit, a-makin' the wicked think o' der Saviour. He's a-comin' back to teach his people. He promised me so hisself. "O Lordy, Lordy," he chanted, his face turned to the sky, "send dat chile o' mine home to save men's souls!"

Then Old Master passed away. The old cabins became more distressingly ramshackle even than before. The crops failed, and grim poverty hung about the doors. And Uncle Jose waited for his boy and prayed again, "O Lordy, Lordy, send dat chile o' mine home quick to lift his people out o' der distresses!"

It was about hog killing time one year, that John Henry came home to help his people out o' their "distresses." A quick stepping, well-set-up man he had grown to be, but the smile was

just the same boy's smile—a flash like a ray of sun across the night of his face.

"We needed yuh, son," said his old grandpap. "Yo' come to teach yo'r people?"

"Yes, Grandpap," said John Henry, "I've come to teach my people. An' I've learned a lot of things to teach them."

"When yo' gwine begin teaching them?"

"Next Wednesday."

"Wednesday!" exclaimed the old man. "Why doan' yuh begin on de Lord's Day, John Henry?"

"Because," smiled John Henry, "you don't generally kill hogs on the Lord's Day."

"Kill hogs!" The old man stared at him in amazement.

"Yes, Grandpap. I've come back to teach my people how to kill hogs and how to cure ham, the finest, sweetest way. We're going in for hogs down here, and this settlement's going to be known wherever people eat ham. We're going to raise shoats, and we're going to have money, money for a church and corn and schools and food. I've come back to help my people."

"Shoat raisin'!" The old man's voice quivered with anger. "Shoat raisin'! I thought yuh came back to save souls!"

"Listen, Grandpap," the young man tried to soothe the old one. "There's ways and ways of serving the Lord. And one way is by helping folks to feed themselves. There's a new day coming to this old place. You just wait and see. I learned how to cure ham when I was away, Grandpap, in a way that can't be beat!"

"Cure ham! So dat's what Old Master was gibin' his money for! A ham-curer—dat's what you-all's turned out to be!"

And then in a sudden fury he cried, "Git out o' hyah, yo' *ham-curer!* Git out, ah say!"

With bitterness in his heart Uncle Jose watched the procession of neighbors file up to the little old schoolhouse on the hill, each driving a hog. "Ham-curer!" snorted the old man. And his years seemed to press on his heart.

But little by little news of John Henry's experiments leaked out into the world beyond. More and more demands came for ham cured under John Henry's direction. The little houses were fixed up, several boys from the settlement

went away to school, the community built a new church and hired a new preacher—a preacher who could give all his time to being a preacher, for that is what John Henry believed the settlement needed, but couldn't have until it was prosperous.

It was the day of the first service in the new church. Old Uncle Jose hobbled into the meeting. He had grown very, very old of late; his back was bent almost double. He sat silent during the service, but his eye often wandered over to where John Henry sat. What a cute chile he had been. And what a white, clean smile he had! And then old Uncle Jose bowed his head in thought. With a heart full of anger, he had turned this child out from his home. The congregation rose to sing the last hymn. Old Uncle Jose stood up too.

"Friends," he announced, turning to the people, and his voice was worn thin with time, "ah've been a sinnah! Ah kin see it all now. Ah turned de chile of my heart away from ma do'. Ah thought de only way yo' cud praise de Lord was by preachin' and prayin'. Oh, folks, ah been powerful mistaken! Fo' hyah's John Henry

done save as many souls and as many lives as any preachuh we ever did have. Ef he hadn't come home, whah'd we git de money to build dis temple to de Lord? Ef he hadn't come home, whah'd we git de food to put in our moufs? Ef he hadn't come home, how'd we have got this fine new preachuh? Ef he hadn't come home, who'd a-cared whether his soul was saved or not? Praise de Lord! In his great goodness he sees dat dese poah colored folks need someone to teach 'em to cure ham, de same as dey need preachin' and prayin'." Here he turned to John Henry, standing in his pew sheepish and grinning.

"John Henry," he said, "yo' mammy's got a chicken on de fiah now ef yo' cares to come home and forgib dis ole man."

Such new life came with the new church as never before was seen. They talk about it yet down in John Henry's town. And if you care to go there, you will find old Uncle Jose, still dozing in the sun before the door, waiting for the Lord to call him. And if you were to waken him, he would probably tell you with much wagging of his head how a curer of ham brought the Kingdom of God to his people.

VIII

THE TEST

NAGASHA NIKAIDA was born in the Japanese quarter of Honolulu. As a round-eyed baby she had bobbed about on the back of her mother while her mother bought fish in the market-places. As a toddler, she had lisped the words of her father's people as if she were back in the village streets of old Japan. As a little girl, she had learned to drink her tea correctly, sipping it daintily in, to hold her fan correctly in a formal Japanese dance, to bow sedately to her mother when she came in from play, to arrange the flowers daintily before the place of honor. By the time she was six years old she knew all the festivals—when to hang the paper fishes for the Feast of Lanterns, how to besmear the kitchen god with molasses before the Glad New Year, and what her dolls must wear for the doll festival which belongs especially to girls.

Very gently she could entertain her little sister with wonder tales from that far country of which her father had told her so much: tales of Jimmu, first ruler of Japan, of Ahira his lovely wife, of Princes Fire Fade and Fire Glow, of the Dragon King who lives under the sea, and the eighty earthly spiders, and Uzume the Sun Goddess—stories, all of them, of Japan's earliest days. And fairy tales she knew,—the story of the tongue-cut sparrow,—and the tales of great warriors and noble women. With all her heart Nagasha adored the land of her fathers and taught her sister to, also.

And then she went to school.

It was an American school, of course, where the teachers spoke a strange new tongue and the children dressed in odd, quite foreign clothes.

Long before she could really understand what other children were saying about her, she realized that she was different from the others. In school, like a real Japanese lady, she gave no sign of this, but she would come home in the afternoon and cry and cry and cry.

In Japan no child ever cries, so Nagasha's mother was much alarmed. When she fully

understood, however, regretfully she laid away the gay-flowered kimono, the gold and scarlet obis, and Nagasha crept shyly into her seat at school, arrayed in a plain American middy and a voluminous pleated skirt.

The official middy and blue pleated skirt gave Nagasha confidence. All at once the many-syllabled words in the reader came more easily; all at once, it seemed, she could understand everything the children said to her. They became chummy with her, and came home with her to play their noisy, rollicking American games in her mother's prim little sitting garden with its tiny lakes and fragile picture bridges. And always they babbled together in English. When they became too boisterous, Madam Nikaida administered a gentle rebuke in Japanese, or suggested parties—tea, which the American children did not like, and pretty Japanese wafers, which they did like,—these other children would stop and listen open-mouthed to the vigorous staccato of her Japanese words. Then came times when her mother called to her to run an errand that Nagasha did not come very promptly, and retorted something in English which she

knew her mother did not understand. It was the height of rudeness, and Nagasha knew it.

"Well, I'm an American," she would reply roughly to her mother. "Why should I speak Japanese?"

It was at school that she had learned that she was American and not Japanese. It was at school that she had learned to salute the flag and sing "The Star Spangled Banner." The stories she told her little sister now were stories of Washington, and Franklin, and Whittier, and Lincoln. Almost she forgot the white flag with the blazing scarlet sun upon it, and Jimmu, and the cut-tongued sparrow.

"You will forget your Japanese entirely," said her mother. "From now on you must go to Japanese language school in the afternoon after the American school is over."

But it did no good. Even the little sister spoke English now, and Nagasha hardly noticed the distress of her Japanese mother, so busy she was —trying to be American.

She was promoted in school each year, until, at length, she reached the seventh grade. That, for her, was a tremendous year, for the govern-

ment of the new country offered a prize for the best composition written by a seventh-grade child on the subject, "Why Is America Great and How Can Her Greatness Be Tested?"

Every child in every seventh grade in the land was to write a composition on this subject. The government had sent out a proclamation. Nagasha knew about proclamations, for in Japanese history the Emperors were always sending out proclamations—only the Emperors' proclamations were sent, as far as Nagasha knew, to grown people, not to children. The government of the United States had sent out a proclamation to children. The proclamation had been sent to all the schools in all the states—and to Alaska and Porto Rico and Hawaii.

The teacher explained everything that the proclamation said—about the length the compositions were to be, and how they were to be written in ink, and how the children were to have two weeks to think about what they wished to write, and how they must be careful to write on America's greatness and the test of her greatness and not on any other subject that sounded like it.

It was very exciting. Nagasha liked to write compositions, and she *loved* America.

All the other children were excited too. They could think of nothing else.

"Do you know why America is great?" asked a little school friend skipping up to Nagasha.

"Well, I—" began Nagasha, but the little girl cut her short.

"Because it wins wars," she said and skipped off.

"But if my country were fighting a war to help make something right, it would be great even if it were beaten all to pieces," thought Nagasha. "Mother thinks Japan is the greatest country in the world. I wonder why."

"Mother," she asked that night, "why do you think Japan is so much greater than any other country?"

"Because it is the home of my mother and my father, and their mothers and fathers," answered Nagasha's mother, "and because it is my duty to think my own country great." There was a beautiful, exultant expression in her mother's eyes.

"Why don't you go back, then?" Nagasha persisted.

"Ah, Japan has so many people. There is not enough to feed all and the pay is small. Some day, when we get enough money to live there, we shall all go back."

Mrs. Nakaida stood lost in thought. Nagasha knew that her mother was dreaming of temple bells and cherry orchards in the springtime.

The next day in the school yard Nagasha and two of her little playmates settled down to discuss why their country was great.

"My mother says," said Nagasha, "that America gives more wages so you can feed your children."

"My mother says," said a little girl whose parents had come from Korea, "that here we can go to school whether we have any money or not."

"My father says," said a little girl whose father had come from China, "that here everyone can help rule, and if you're smart enough, you can even be president—but," she added, "my father likes China best."

"And my mother likes Korea best," said the little girl whose parents had been born in Korea.

"And my mother likes Japan best," said Nagasha.

The three little friends sat puzzled.

"Do you suppose we think America is great because we were born here?" asked Nagasha. "That wouldn't make a very good composition."

On her way home from school, Nagasha passed the mission play yard.

"Hello, Nagasha," sang out Mr. Harper. "What makes you so serious today?"

"I've a composition to write," explained Nagasha.

"Suppose I could help you?"

"Why," replied Nagasha happily, "you probably know more about it all than anybody I know—because you come straight from the United States."

And Nagasha explained about the proclamation, and about what the little girl from China had said, and what the little girl from Korea had said, and what her own mother had said about the greatness of their adopted country,—and yet that they all loved best their own countries.

"Mr. Harper, why do *you* think America is great," concluded Nagasha, "and what do you think is the test of her greatness?"

Mr. Harper thought awhile.

"It is true," he said slowly, "that the United States sends most of her children to school, and it is true that she pays higher wages than most countries, and that one does not have to be of a certain rank or class to be president, but I do not think that it is because of these things that America is great."

"Then why do you think America is great?" persisted Nagasha.

"America is great," Mr. Harper spoke deliberately, "because it was built on Christian ideals. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Ideals—" she repeated uncertainly. "What are ideals? Are they like ideas?"

"Yes," Mr. Harper smiled. "Your ideal of a thing is your idea of what a thing *ought to be*—your idea of what it would be like if it were exactly what it ought to be. It is true, Nagasha, that all sorts of people, in all countries and in all times, have had ideals of what we human beings ought to be like. Christ's ideals for us were truer, more beautiful, more exactly right than the ideals of any other person who ever lived, because his ideas of what we can be and ought to be are God's ideas of what we ought to be."

"And God thinks—" suggested Nagasha.

"Christ taught that God loves everybody—black, and white, and yellow, and brown—and that we are all brothers—Indians, and Chinese, Americans, English, and Japanese—and that if we love Him we will love each other.

"Of course," Mr. Harper went on, "all Americans do not love each other, and many Americans thoroughly dislike people of other races. But most of the people in our country know that God loves all people, and that *they* ought to love all people too. And when they do, they will be a little more like what God intends that they shall be."

"So *that* is why America is great?" asked Nagasha thoughtfully.

"A nation is great, Nagasha," said Mr. Harper, "only in so far as all its people are doing what God thinks they ought to do; only in so far as every one of its children is trying to find out what God's purpose is for him—or for her, and then goes ahead and achieves it!"

Nagasha stood very, very still. There was a long silence. Then Mr. Harper continued:

"You asked 'What is the test of America's

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greatness?' Nagasha. What do *you* think is the test of her greatness?"

The little Japanese girl looked up shyly.

"The real test of America's greatness would be whether we—each of us Americans—think about each other and other people—the way Christ does —Ideals, you call them?—whether we have Christian ideals!"

Nagasha went home slowly. The two weeks passed and she wrote her essay with the other children, her head bowed over her desk and her pen held tightly in her hand.

The essays were mailed in a great envelope, and the sun rose and the sun set, and the waters lapped along the shore just as usual.

But Nagasha was not "as usual." Very busily in school she was studying her history—and her poetry and the stories in her readers, looking always for those "Christian ideals" upon which, Mr. Harper had told her, her country was built. It made school ever so much more interesting. Then she began to think of ideals at home.

Nagasha looked at her mother wondering. After all, what a gracious, beautiful lady she was, doing always for others, careful of their

feelings, their wishes, their customs. She was not yet called a Christian, but she followed Christ's ideals more than Nagasha had ever done.

Nagasha was confessing her difficulties to Mr. Harper.

"I lost my temper with little Suto today and yesterday I answered back—in English—when mother said I was careless about the food. It wasn't very Christian—very American."

Mr. Harper smiled.

"You were thinking about yourself, weren't you Nagasha, more than about your mother. Well, you know, it takes a good deal of practice to be a Christian."

So Nagasha tried hard to remember how her parents felt. She tried to talk to them now often in their native tongue, she drilled little sister in Japanese, and she told them more and more of what Mr. Harper and the great American school were teaching her.

"You are once more a little daughter of Japan," her mother said to her caressingly when Nagasha had been unusually helpful about the house.

"No, mother," laughed Nagasha, "I'm an

American. Of course I love Japan," she added hastily, seeing a bit of pain in her mother's eyes ". . . all *real* Americans, all Christian Americans, love other countries, but well, I love America, just because she does feel that way about you Japanese, and the Chinese, and the Indians—and all the other people in the world," she added, out of breath.

Poor Mrs. Nikaida was more disturbed than ever. She went fluttering to her husband about it.

"I have not seen this great love for other countries in America," said her husband, "but perhaps I have not seen the real America."

The spring came again. The scent of a thousand flowers lay thick in the air. Already the children were thinking of vacation time. Most of them had forgotten about the compositions they had written early in the fall. But the compositions had gone away and they had been read with all the other compositions and they had been sifted and sifted until finally one remained.

A letter was written to the little girl who had written that one—a big square letter on heavy

white paper, with a seal at the end. And in that letter there was enclosed a check with order to pay the sum of five hundred dollars to Miss Nagasha Nikaida.

Such a hubbub as there was! The school in Honolulu flaunted its flag because of its pride. The essay was printed in the papers. Everyone was pleased.

A great official with medals on his chest came to the schoolhouse. The band played triumphantly. And Nagasha, dressed in a white dress, was called up to the platform before everybody to read her paper in her clear, thin voice.

Afterwards the great official made an impressive speech during which there was much applause. And no one applauded louder or longer than Father and Mother Nikaida who could not understand one word of English.

At the end of his speech the great official pinned a medal on Nagasha's dress, and everyone clapped.

"This new country has honored the daughter of our home," said Father Nikaida, who had not understood a word, "I and my household shall honor this new country."

IX

LITTLE TONGUE NITA

NITA lived out in the West where the air is so clear and so clean that there is not a speck of dirt for miles and miles, and the stars hang so low at night that it seems as if you could reach up and touch them.

From the early days when she was a solemn-faced baby toddling after her mother in the little Indian settlement, Nita had hardly made a sound. One old chief had opened her mouth one day and pulled her tongue. Then he had said, "She has too small a tongue to speak much—Little Tongue Nita!" And the name had stuck.

In other ways she was not different from other little Indian girls. She played about the little adobe hogans of the settlement. She learned early to weave the baskets that her mother carried down to the railroad to sell to tourists. Her slender little hands soon shaped the pottery that

was baked in the sun. And it was a joy to see her coming back from the well,—her water jug poised on her shoulder,—grave, demure, like some maiden of an ancient day.

But when the night came and the stars came out, she would creep up and listen to the talk of the men about the fires. Always they talked of two things—of the days that had passed and of the White Man. It was the White Man, they said, who had taken away the glory of the Indians, until now they sat before their doors and busied themselves with basket-making, like a nation of women. And Nita quivered with hatred.

"Some day they shall pay—these White Men!" she resolved in her heart; and she burned with shame to think that the men of her tribe would content themselves with talking about a camp-fire instead of doing something to avenge their people.

It so happened that several miles away from the settlement, down the shining tracks, there was a mission school kept by some good women whom the children called "Sisters." Every year these Sisters would come up to the settlement

and pick out the brightest of the children to educate. Nita hated the Sisters because they were white. But as fate would have it, one year they chose Nita to come and live at the school. She was taken down to a new world, a world of chiming mission bells, and prayers, and chants, and tasks to be performed. But Nita was rebellious. What was the good of prayers and chants, she thought, if the people who said them stole the very life of another person's tribe? And she grew more silent and more silent, and hated the good Sisters more deeply every day.

Once she stood by the gate and let some white visitors into the mission.

"The little dear!" cried one. "Isn't she adorable?"

Nita's face went black with anger.

"Yes," the other one said, "but they say that as soon as the Indians are educated, they go back to their old life again—go back to their blankets and their filth."

Nita's fist clenched. "Some day," she said to herself, "some day they shall pay!"

One day Nita came before the head teacher and asked abruptly, "*Why* do you teach us?"

"So that you may go back and live good lives," said the head Sister. "You can live in your village as you live here. And you will not be heathen."

"Heathen!" What did "heathen" mean? Nita wondered. She knew from the sound of it that it meant something bad.

"I will go back now. And I'm going to be a heathen too!" So declared Nita fiercely.

The good Sister thought she had not heard aright, but Nita was determined. She did not speak, she did not eat; she would do nothing. And hate lay black across her face.

At last, the teachers, in despair, not knowing what else to do, sent her back, over the shining tracks, to her village. And again little Nita sat silently and contemptuously before her father's home and made baskets.

"Some day!" she promised herself, and wished she were as strong as the young braves.

"White people are liars," so she reasoned. "They pray, but they also steal. They steal not only money and land; they steal the pride of a race. An Indian would care for a friend. A White Man would rob him." With white people

she would have nothing to do. She refused even to go to the train to sell her pottery and baskets, sending them down by her mother instead.

One day when the heat rose in shimmering waves over the land, and the smell of sage made your nose tingle, a group of Americans came to visit the little village. They came with cameras—Nita knew well what cameras were—to pry out the secrets of her tribe.

She watched them come. Surely her people would rise up against them. But, no! The braves who had talked the loudest went forward to meet the Whites with courtesy. When she saw this, Nita took to her swift little heels and ran away across the shifting shadows of the mesa. She ran and ran and ran. And with the hate of the White Man there was blended a deep shame of her people, who talked and talked about the wrong-doing of the White Man toward the Indian but who would not avenge it.

By and by she stopped running and looked about her. Away off over a ledge of rock rose the straight thin smoke of a fire. Nita's curiosity was aroused. She had not been away from her

little village since she had come back from the Sisters' school, and she felt that this was an adventure.

So she came close. She climbed up on a red rock, that looked for all the world as if it had been painted with some gigantic, splashing brush, and, peering over, she saw a little house lying quiet in the heat of the sun. As she lay there on the rock, watching the quiet house, she heard, suddenly, that dread sound of the desert—"Whir-r-r-r-r-r!"

She knew what it was and cried aloud. But it was too late. Already the rattler had sunk his fangs into her little brown leg. Her eyes grew big with fear. Death would come to her—alone in the desert!

But she was not alone. There was a White Man in the little house. He heard her cry, ran to her aid, and carried her to his house. Rapidly he cared for her, speaking no word, while Nita looked on, big-eyed, silent, contemptuous even in her pain and fright.

Beside the White Man stood a little White Girl who cried out now and then in soft little exclamations: "Oh, it will not hurt so now! . . .

It will not kill her, will it, Father? . . . Oh, say she's better, Father! . . . It is better now, isn't it, little girl?"

Soft words for a child of white people!

At last the White Man got up.

"I guess you'll be better now. We've cleaned out the poison pretty well. Maybe you'd better lie down and rest a little."

But Nita sat up. Soon the dusk would creep over the mesa and then, swiftly following, the night, with the barking of the coyotes in the distance! She must go home.

"I must go home," she insisted.

"Where do you live? In the Indian settlement?"

Nita nodded.

"Is she an Indian, Father?" The little White Girl looked at Nita wonderingly. "Does she scalp people, Father?"

And then the White Man threw back his head and laughed, and Nita smiled. Yes, she did—a shy, queer little smile that twisted her lips, because she had smiled so very little in all her life before.

"I'd like to be friends," said the little White Girl, "if she won't scalp me." And she stuck

out a very small hand. Oh, Nita knew what to do. The good Sisters had taught her some things. She stuck out her own slim brown hand, and solemnly the little daughters of different races shook hands.

"My name's Mary," went on the little White Girl, "and you must come and see me all the time. Will you?"

Later, when the White Man was ready to take Nita home to her little village, Mary called after them, "Good-by, Little Tongue Nita. Come soon again."

A long summer of delightful comradeship followed. Then, one day Mary had to go away, but she promised Nita that she would come back again when the spring came across the desert.

Friendship is good. That night when the men settled down about the fire and began the old tale of the trickery of the White Man, Nita came among them. She looked very small as she stood there, but she spoke bravely.

"What you say is a lie," she said. "All White Men are not as you say. I know at least one very good White Man and his child. I am their friend."

In the silence that followed, Little Tongue Nita returned to her hogan. She did not know that she had stopped hating. And yet through the friendship of a good man and a little girl, Nita had been born into the Kingdom of Love between races.

"I'd like to be friends," said the little White Girl, "if she won't scalp me."

X

THE LOG BABY

THERE was still a little diluted sunlight in the open trail between the pine trees, but the shadows under the greenwood were already pitchy black. Timothy O'Neill, master logger and head sawyer, stepped briskly along. He ached with hunger. One-eyed Mose, he knew, was even now spooning out savory, smoking stuff to the boys in the shack. The camp was lucky this year, he mused, to have one-eyed Mose for cook.

The woods that had been reverberating all day with the whirr of saws and the crash of falling trees and the lusty yells of busy men were full of the peace of early evening. Sleepy birds, pine-cones falling, the sound of his own footsteps on the needles that carpeted his pathway—these were the only sounds. But Tim, intent on supper, did not hear them.

Then suddenly he stopped dead in his tracks.

A gray wolf? No. A red fox? No. A mother deer? No. A brown bear? No. A porcupine? No. A beaver, then! No.

None of these would have astonished Tim. A woodsman hears such things in his sleep. But the sound that Tim heard did astonish him. It astonished him because it wasn't a woods sound at all. It was a queer, puzzling little sound. It sounded—"Bless me," gasped Tim, "it sounds like a *kid!*"

Of course there were no children about. Some camps had their women and children along, but in this camp there were only men—"Hard old pilgrims, too!" thought Tim. "There ain't no children about!"

Much puzzled, Tim stepped along. Then it came again, the odd little noise,—soft and low.

"It *is* a kid!" gasped Tim, "—only it *can't* be. There ain't no children about."

Nevertheless, he parted the branches along the trail, and there, sitting under a tree, as chipper and as happy as a squirrel, was a little year-old baby! He was pulling up great handfuls of the green-tufted moss, and laughing, and making little gurgly noises to himself!

"Well, I'll be blowed!" exclaimed Timothy O'Neill. Then sternly, to the baby, "Where's your Ma?"

The child held up a tuft of moss and laughed.

"Anybody lost a kid?" yelled Tim. "An—y bod—y lost a kid?" he roared. But the woods only answered faintly, "An—y bod—lo—os—ki—!" And the shadows under the greenwood were growing darker every minute.

Timothy O'Neill whipped an old letter out of his pocket. "We got the kid at the shack," he wrote on the back of the envelope and stuck it on the trail side of a tree.

"Yi, yi! Where'd you get the kid?" yelled the boys as Tim strode into the cabin, the baby under his arm.

"Found him growing on a tree, did you?" hooted another.

"Nice little cub," commented Sweeney.

By way of appreciation of the compliment, the "nice little kid" blew bubbles at Sweeney; but, when one-eyed Mose appeared, he held out his hands ingratiatingly. At this the boys yelled again.

"He knows where his grub comes from," they

roared. Then they all stood around while Tim and Mose fed him some soup.

"Don't give it to him so fast," objected Bill McGowan.

"Nor so hot," screamed Jack O'Reilly.

"It can sleep in my bunk," suggested Jim Buck hopefully.

"No, it's going to sleep in mine!" insisted Tim. "I found him!" he added defiantly.

"What'll you do when its maw comes after it?" scoffed Billy McCune.

"Finders is keepers!" That settled it, for no mother, no *any*thing, ever came to claim the Log Baby.

That was what they called him, and it was the only name he ever knew. They shortened it to "Babe" as he grew in stature. And he did grow—like a young jack pine. To indicate his height, the gang cut notches on the great camp door.

First he grew big enough to toddle as far as the big stump—when the men came home of an evening. They had taught him to walk—from Bill to Tim, from Tim to Mose. That he could walk to the stump was victory indeed.

Then he grew big enough to ride down the

corduroy road to the cutting, on the joggly, bumpy lumberman's sledge. All day he would play about, watching with big eyes the fussy squirrels scampering about on the brown needles below and the shrieking, tearing pines that crashed out of the heavens above.

How singingly those trees crashed! What a thrill after the long, low, one-sided z-zaw—z-zaw—z-zaw of the buzz-saws, z-zawing, z-zawing, hour after hour, to hear the sudden ripping, splitting of great timbers, the warning cries of the men as they rushed for shelter, the beautiful crash—thud! of the giant tree as it reached the needle-carpeted earth.

Babe seemed to know the woods by instinct. Over gurgling brooks, under wet limestone ledges, into the charred play-houses that hollow trees afforded, he wandered, a mere scrap of a boy, in search of sights and sounds, strange new things to touch and see and feel—fuzzy little ferns that curled cutely around your finger, queer wet little toads that hopped amazingly out of your reach, fat little stones all covered with moss, on which you could rest your weary, five-year-old legs!

Once, when he was sitting, all quiet, on such a stone, a baby deer had come dashing—pell-mell—down the little hill in front of him! Before he was seven, he knew the tracks of the big brown deer. At eight he had seen elk and grown-up deer. By nine he had caught trout and muskalonge. By ten he knew where to find every bird, its nest, its young. By twelve he could tell the age of a tree by the number of rings in the trunk—the men had taught him to count—and the age of a stag by its antlers. At sixteen he could handle a saw like any man, and fight fires in summer, and drive a three-teamed sledge in winter.

But before he was as old as all that, he had gone to school. This had come about because a woman had visited camp. She and her husband were home missionaries who had come into the pine country to try to make the big, rough lumberman's life a little pleasanter, a little kinder. Babe felt that he would never forget that day as long as he lived. It had been when he was quite small—seven or eight perhaps.

There had been talk that he understood, about quail and elk and Norway pines, and there had been talk that he did not understand—about edu-

cation and lack of relatives—and finances—whatever they were. He had seen women before, in the lumbering town to which the men took him one winter when they were out of work; but he had never seen anyone, man or woman, cry before. The men had never cried. Big Jake had roared and moaned when he fell off a load of logs onto the ice, and lame Pete had cussed like anything when word came that they were to change camps in midwinter. But none of the men had ever cried. The woman's tears had fallen hot on his cheek, and her arms had felt soft and warm about him, and there had been a queer fragrance about her—different from lumbermen. "Women," thought Babe, "are queer things—rather nice, but queer."

It was after the visit of this woman that Babe had awakened one night in his bunk and had overheard the men talking around the stove. Uncle Tim was saying, "She says he's got to go to school."

And that was the beginning of a new adventure. The men sent their log baby away to a school the woman knew of. This was pretty hard for the little boy at first. He moped and

pined for the big hearty lumbermen, but he knew he had to stand it, and stand it he did. He crossed off the days on an old calendar until he could go back to camp, and every night the men at camp crossed off a day too until Babe would be coming home, for wherever the men were camped was "home" to Babe. When vacation times came, the men would quiz him on all he had learned.

One day Buck came into the shack with a tin box. He opened it and put in some money.

"What's that for?" asked Tim.

"It's for the Log Baby to go to college," said Buck. "And ever' man here gives to it ever' pay day. D' you understand?"

Buck didn't need to set his ugly jaw even for a minute, for the boys fell all over themselves to give. "Our kid in college!" they said. "Whoopee! He's some kid!"

But after Babe went to college, a change came over the men. They grew glum—and they spoke of the boy less often. When the time came for his first vacation, they were all uneasy. Way back when he was a little kid they had taught him all they knew. Big Tim had guided his chubby fist as Babe pushed an enormous lumberman's

pencil over wrinkled grocery sacks and wrapping paper. Old Jake had taught him to calculate the height of a tree by measuring its shadow at noon, and, roughly, to gauge the distance through a tree by measuring the distance 'round it. That they didn't know how to teach him the history and grammar he learned a little later didn't bother them. But now he was in college—an unknown country to these rough woodsmen. Would Babe come back and measure them by new standards—and find them wanting?

The sun came up over the mountain. The men were each on edge—not one, however, saying a word about his fear to another. Then, coming up on the first log train, was Babe, grinning and happy to be "home" again. After one glance, tense muscles were loosened, and life went on as before.

It was three years later that Babe graduated, and the whole camp went down to see him do it. No fond parents were more proud of their sons than were Tim and Buck and one-eyed Mose and the others of the tall blue-eyed log baby in his cap and gown.

"Boys," said Babe when graduation was over.

"I've got to begin my life work, and I'm coming up to the woods to talk it over with you, but I want to stay on here just a little while longer."

The big lumbermen went back to their woods quiet and depressed.

"Well, that's the last we'll see of Babe!" said one. "You cut out drinkin' and swearin', and save your money for kids—and then they grow up and you lose 'em."

Suddenly, one night a week later the door of the cabin banged!

"Hi there!" It was the boss himself. "Wake up, you owls, you! I brought the new manager up to meet you."

The boys had heard that there was to be a new manager, but they had taken little interest because their minds had been all taken up with Babe's graduation.

"This is him," said the boss, and there behind him stood Babe, grinning and chuckling to think how he had fooled the boys.

"Babe," said Tim some time later, "how'd you happen to come back here when you could a-done so many other things?"

"Because I like the old woods," Babe replied,

"and because you've taught me that God Almighty is here."

"In the woods?" asked Tim rather dazed.

"No, in you," replied Babe.

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